

Andrew Jackson to Ephraim Hubbard Foster, June 22, 1832, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO EPHRAIM H. FOSTER.¹

¹ Handwriting of A. J. Donelson.

Washington, June 22, 1832.

D'r Sir, I have recd. to day from the hands of Judge White of the Senate your letter of the 10th inst apprising me that my name has been used and connected with the senatorial election shortly to be made by the Legislature of Tennessee without saying by whom; and asking me for an explanation which will remove all misapprehension of my views or wishes on the subject.

It is a matter of much surprise to me that any of my friends should suppose, whatever my personal relations may be to any candidate for the office in question, that I could so far lose sight of my official station as to wish to make it subservient to such relations. The charge of Executive influence or interference in any form with the purity and freedom of state elections is a most serious one, and one that I feel confident no act of mine can make imputable to this administration. So strongly was I impressed with the importance of conducting the operations of the Federal Government so as to steer clear of this charge, that I deemed it my duty to pledge my administration to the observance and practice of the principles which would effect it: and I trust if the pledge has not been entirely redeemed, in the estimation of any of my friends, there are none who would desire to make my own acts an example of its failure.

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In reference to Mr. Grundy, not as a candidate or a competitor of your's for the office he now holds, but as a public man entitled to the measure of justice for the faithful performance of his duty, I have no doubt on many occasions spoken in terms of satisfaction and pleasure with regard to his course here as a senator. In doing so, however, it must be obvious that I was but doing justice to his acts here and exercising the privilege of an individual; that privilege which is inseparable from the idea of a freeman and which in this country is the foundation of all public character because it is in its just exercise that the public servants find the highest rewards for their services. To suppose that my approbation of Mr. Grundy's general conduct as a Senator cannot be expressed without subjecting me to the charge of desiring to procure his reelection or of being understood as having an unfavorable opinion of the claims of those who may be his competitors, is affixing to my character and to those who are considered as within its influence a want of elevation which I feel confident neither you nor any member of the Tennessee Legislature would countenance.² you must recollect, that very lately I have been charged with using my influence against judge Grundy to favour the election of those opposed to him. Each rumour is equally unfounded. I interfere not in state elections leaving the people whose province it is freely to choose their own agents, whilst I confine myself solely to the performance of those constitutional duties conferred upon me by the partiality of the people.

² From this place to the end the handwriting is Jackson's.

With my kind salutations to your father and mother and their family, your Lady and family, believe me to be very respectfully yr. friend